

Thank you for your comment, Bobby Wilson.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is GLMRISBRS50011.

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GLMRIS Brandon Road Scoping

Comment ID: GLMRISBRS50011

First Name: Bobby

Middle Initial:

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Attachment: USACE Brandon Road signed.pdf

Comment Submitted:



January 30, 2015

Mr. David Wethington
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago
District, GLMRIS ANS Control
Comments, 231 S. LaSalle St., Suite
1500, Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Wethington,

I am writing on behalf of the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA), an organization of 28 state fish and game management agencies in the Mississippi River Basin. MICRA has long been concerned about the exchange of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River via the Chicago Area Waterways System (CAWS) and other man-made connections between these two ecologically and environmentally important basins.

The Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) identifies the risk of ANS introductions into the Mississippi River Basin from the Great Lakes and discusses the need for measures to prevent the exchange of ANS in both directions between the Mississippi and Great Lakes basins. MICRA supports the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) plans to evaluate options at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam site as a first step to continue working towards solutions that prevent the movement of ANS in both directions between these two important basins. Due to the nature of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam structures, actions investigated by the USACE are expected to only reduce the risks of certain ANS moving from the Illinois Waterway upriver into the Great Lakes. While these actions will hopefully provide some immediate protections against Asian carps and other ANS from entering the Great Lakes via the CAWS, this is only a fraction of the scope of GLMRIS and additional immediate work is needed.

MICRA previously provided comments to the USACE expressing the need for both immediate measures to reduce risks and near-term solutions to prevent inter-basin exchange of ANS in both directions via the CAWS and other existing connections. MICRA respectfully urges the USACE to aggressively evaluate additional alternatives and actions to immediately reduce risks of downstream movement of all ANS from the Great Lakes into the Mississippi River Basin. Immediate risk reduction and long-term solutions are needed for the Mississippi River Basin and should be considered concurrent to planned evaluations at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam. The ecologic and economic threats to both the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basin from

ANS are immediate and it is imperative that immediate efforts to prevent the movement of ANS between these two basins not be limited to the upriver movement of Asian carps, but address movement in both directions.

The Mississippi River Basin is the largest watershed in the nation, draining all or part of 31 states and two Canadian provinces. The watershed measures approximately 1.2 million square miles, and covers 41% of the continental United States. The Mississippi River and its tributaries comprise one of the largest and most valuable ecosystems in the world. Fishery and aquatic resources of economic and ecological importance are supported throughout the basin, contributing approximately \$17.2 billion to the economy annually. ANS are second only to habitat loss and fragmentation as threats to the conservation of aquatic resources native to the Mississippi River Basin.

In keeping with MICRA's mission to improve the conservation, management and utilization of interjurisdictional fishery resources in the Mississippi River Basin through improved coordination and communication among the responsible management entities, I look forward to working with the USACE and other stakeholders in the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins to identify and implement both immediate actions to reduce risks and near-term solutions that will prevent the inter-basin transfer of ANS in both directions between these two basins..

Respectfully,



Bobby Wilson
MICRA Chairman